

## LITERARY NOTES.

Mr. Henry James is to speak before the Saturday Morning Club in Boston this week.

Some Massachusetts amateurs are playing Mr. Howells's little comedy, "The Sleeping Car." Other amateurs will no doubt find Mr. Osgood's neat edition of the play useful and entertaining.

The Round Robin novel "Fanchette" is attributed to Mr. John Esten Cooke. If it be really the work of the Virginian writer, he has certainly made a total change in his literary style.

It has been justly said that of one set of persons—his kinsfolk—Carlyle always speaks charitably; but what seems to him a virtue in them he is apt to look upon as a fault in others. Mrs. Carlyle in one of her letters mentions a melody as dying away "into unintelligible whinny," and Carlyle complacently explains that the student of folk-lore examined in that apparently trivial subject is that of the student of folktale. Examined in that light the childlike pastimes of the history prove to be an important and curious branch of the history of the manners and customs of medieval times. With admirable skill Mr. Nutall analyzes the various parts which they originated, and by reference to state and social life in the middle ages imports mounting and coherent illustrations used in familiar sports which appear to be nothing more than arbitrary and unscientific legends. Thus he illustrates the fact that "the faith and fashion of half a thousand years ago" unconsciously furnish the amusement of the youth of the present day.

The life of Benjamin Franklin in the American Men of Letters series is to be written by Professor McMaster of Princeton, author of the new history of the American people.

Mr. Robert Grant, the author of that flippant but popular trifle, the "Frolicous Girl," has nearly completed another novel.

Mr. Ruskin is at present a very busy man. The new edition of the second volume of "Modern Painters" has left its English press. It contains not only a new preface and critical notes but also an "epilogue with autobiographical account of the author's early art studies." A new edition of the "Seven Lamps of Architecture" is also forthcoming. The recent Oxford lecture on "Rossetti and Holman Hunt" is to be published immediately, and will be followed by others to be delivered next term under the general title of "The Arts of England." The beautiful story of a Florentine girl, from which Mr. Ruskin read some extracts in his Oxford lecture, is to be published this month, with a preface by Mr. Ruskin himself. These new labors have fortunately not interfered with the progress of some of the many other books which Mr. Ruskin has had on hand for several years, and fresh chapters are to be forthcoming this month to "Democracy, or Collected Studies of the Lapse of Waves and Life of Stones," to "Our Fathers have told us; or, Sketches of the History of Christendom for Boys and Girls who have been held at us," "Fants," and to "For Clergymen," that collection of "fierce lightning-bolts" which Carl recommended as particularly to Emerson. A "Ruskin Birthday-Book" is also promised.

Somebody mentioned as a well-known Bostonian has written a "society novel" called "Mr. and Mrs. Morton," and the book is to be brought out immediately by the new Boston firm of Cudlipp, Upshur & Co., formerly A. S. Williams & Co.

One of Turgenev's latest tales has a shrewd touch of humor. He recounts how Gisafar, the renowned Vizier of Haroun Alraschid, while yet young and undistinguished, rescued a mysterious old man from assassins, and afterward visited this old man at his request. The old man took Gisafar by the hand and led him into a garden enclosed by high walls in the midst of which grew a strange tree, in semblance like a cypress, only its leaves were of an azure hue. Upon this tree hung three apples: one of longish shape, and white as milk; the second round and red; the third little, shrivelled, and yellow. "Youth," said the old man, "pluck and eat one of these apples. If thou eatst the white, thou wilt be the wisest of men; if the red, thou wilt be the richest; if the yellow, thou will be singularly acceptable to all old women. But make speed: the charm loses its virtue within an hour." Gisafar rammed with much perplexity. "If I know everything," thought he, "I shall know more than is good for me; if I become too rich other men will envy me. I will eat the yellow apple." And he did so. The old man laughed with his toothless mouth, and exclaimed: "Good youth! in sooth hast thou chosen the better part. What need hast thou of the white apple? thou art already wiser than Solomon. Nor needst thou the red apple, either; thou wilt be rich enough without it, and none will envy thee." "Venerable sage," responded Gisafar, "deign to indicate me the dwelling of the august mother of the Commander of the Faithful." The old man bowed to the ground and showed the way. And Gisafar was the greatest subject in Bagdad.

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